

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A video encoding method of subjecting an input video signal having a luminance signal and two color difference signals to motion compensation predictive encoding by using (a) a reference picture signal representing at least one reference picture and (b) a motion vector between the input video signal and the reference picture signal, comprising:

selecting one combination, for each block of the input video signal, from a plurality of combinations each including a predictive parameter prepared for each of the luminance signal and the two color difference signals and at least one reference picture number determined in advance for the reference picture;

generating a prediction picture signal in accordance with the reference picture number and predictive parameter of the selected combination;

generating a predictive error signal representing an error between the input video signal and the prediction picture signal; and

encoding the predictive error signal, information of the motion vector, and index information indicating the selected combination.

Claims 2-4 (Canceled).

Claim 5 (Original): The video encoding method according to claim 1, wherein the input video signal is a picture signal input for each frame of a progressive signal or a picture signal input for each frame obtained by merging two fields of an interlaced signal, and the reference picture signal is a picture signal on a frame basis.

Claim 6 (Original): The video encoding method according to claim 1, wherein the input video signal is a picture signal input for each field of an interlaced signal, and the reference picture signal is a picture signal on a field basis.

Claim 7 (Original): The video encoding method according to claim 1, wherein the input video signal is a signal including a picture signal input for each frame of a progressive signal, a picture signal input for each frame obtained by merging two fields of an interlaced signal, and a picture signal input for each field of an interlaced signal, the reference picture signal is a picture signal on a frame basis when the input video signal is the picture signal input for each frame, and the reference picture signal is a picture signal on a field basis when the input video signal is the picture signal input for each field.

Claims 8-18 (Canceled).

Claim 19. (Currently Amended) A video encoding apparatus to subject an input video signal having a luminance signal and two color difference signals to motion compensation predictive encoding by using a reference picture and a motion vector between the input video signal and the reference picture, comprising:

a selector to select one combination, for each block of the input video signal, from a plurality of combinations each including a predictive parameter prepared for each of the luminance signal and the two color difference signals and at least one reference picture number determined in advance for the reference picture;

a prediction picture signal generator to generate a prediction picture signal in accordance with the reference picture number and predictive parameter of the selected combination;

a predictive error signal generator to generate a predictive error signal representing an error between the input video signal and the prediction picture signal; and

an encoder to encode the predictive error signal, information of the motion vector, and index information indicating the selected combination.

Claims 20-22 (Canceled).

Claim 23 (New): The video encoding apparatus according to claim 19, wherein the input video signal is a picture signal input for each frame of a progressive signal or a picture signal input for each frame obtained by merging two fields of an interlaced signal, and the reference picture signal is a picture signal on a frame basis.

Claim 24 (New): The video encoding apparatus according to claim 19, wherein the input video signal is a picture signal input for each field of an interlaced signal, and the reference picture signal is a picture signal on a field basis.

Claim 25 (New): The video encoding apparatus according to claim 19, wherein the input video signal is a signal including (a) a picture signal input for each frame of a progressive signal, (b) a picture signal input for each frame obtained by merging two fields of an interlaced signal, and (c) a picture signal input for each field of an interlaced signal, the reference picture signal is a picture signal on a frame basis when the input video signal is the picture signal input for each frame, and the reference picture signal is a picture signal on a field basis when the input video signal is the picture signal input for each field.

Claim 26 (New): A computer readable storage medium storing instructions of a computer program which when executed by a computer results in performance of steps comprising:

selecting one combination, for each block of an input video signal, from a plurality of combinations each including a predictive parameter prepared for each of a luminance signal

and two color difference signals and at least one reference picture number determined in advance for a reference picture of a reference picture signal;

generating a prediction picture signal in accordance with the reference picture number and predictive parameter of the selected combination;

generating a predictive error signal representing an error between the input video signal and the prediction picture signal; and

encoding the predictive error signal, information of a motion vector between the input video signal and the reference picture signal, and index information indicating the selected combination.